

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2016 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1195 (Delegate Lam)
Appropriations

Task Force to Reduce Recidivism and Reform Correctional Education

This bill establishes a Task Force to Reduce Recidivism and Reform Correctional Education, staffed by the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation (DLLR). The task force must study and make recommendations on (1) the adequacy of available resources; (2) the quality and effectiveness of current correctional education programs for adults and juvenile offenders; (3) the benefits of correctional education programs collaborating with other specified organizations; (4) the optimal system for State oversight and management of correctional education; and (5) the collection of data and outcome measures for participants in correctional education programs. The bill specifies the membership of the task force and requires it to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2016.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2016, and terminates June 30, 2017.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: DLLR can provide staff support to the task force with existing budgeted resources. Any expense reimbursements for task force members are presumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: The Correctional Education Council was established by Chapter 134 of 2008, which transferred responsibility for adult education and literacy services and

correctional services education from the Maryland State Department of Education to DLLR. The council must develop and recommend an educational and workforce training program for adult correctional institutions in the State. The council must also adopt regulations for a mandatory education program for inmates who fail to attain specified minimum educational standards as well as regulations for a mandatory workforce skills training program. Further, the council must advocate and promote the interests of educational programs and workforce skills training opportunities in correctional institutions and regularly review these programs to ensure that educational and training needs of inmates are being met.

Background: The average daily population for inmates in Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services facilities in fiscal 2015 was 20,600. During the same time period, 9,965 offenders were released back into the community through parole, mandatory supervision, expiration of sentence, and court order. Statistics show that, for those offenders released in fiscal 2013, more than 40% returned with a new conviction (prison sentence or parole/probation) within three years of their release from prison.

In fiscal 2015, the Correctional Education Program awarded 220 students a high school diploma, and 916 students received occupational certificates preparing them for employment upon their release.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law on July 22, 2014, replacing the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. WIOA became effective July 1, 2015, and the State has until July 1, 2016, to conform to WIOA. WIOA is designed to help job seekers access the employment, education, training, and support services needed to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Under WIOA, adults and dislocated workers may access career services and training services. WIOA provides for a workforce system that is universally accessible, customer centered, and training that is job driven.

Under WIOA, states must carry out correctional education and education for other institutionalized individuals. Federal funds are available for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional institutions and for other institutionalized individuals, which include academic programs for adult education and literacy activities, special education, secondary school credit, integrated education and training, career pathways, concurrent enrollment, peer tutoring, and transition to re-entry initiatives and other post-release services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation;
U.S. Department of Labor; Department of Legislative Services

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md/rhh

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